

Claims:

47. A keyboard having typing keys arranged in such a way as to provide key arrangement means that provides the user with a choice of different methods of operation for the typing of at least eight different characters.

48. The keyboard of claim 47, wherein said key arrangement means provides the choice of typing said at least ten different characters either on the keys assigned to those characters, or on keys normally assigned to other characters, for example, the choice of typing numerals either on a row of numeral keys, or by shift-selecting them on a row of letter keys.

49. The keyboard of claim 47, wherein said key arrangement means provides the user with the choice of conveniently operating at least one shift key with either a thumb or an index finger while the hands remain substantially in home position.

50. The keyboard of claim 49, wherein said key arrangement means provides the user with the choice of conveniently selecting at least two different shift functions with either a thumb or an index finger while the hands remain substantially in home position.

51. The keyboard of claim 49, wherein said key arrangement means provides the user with the choice of conveniently selecting at least three different shift functions with either a thumb or an index finger while the hands remain substantially in home position.

52. The keyboard of claim 47, wherein said key arrangement means provides the user with the choice of conveniently using either one hand or two for typing shift-character combinations, while the hands remain substantially in home position.

53. The keyboard of claim 47, wherein said key arrangement means provides the choice of selecting alternative configurations of the columns of keys assigned to particular fingers, for example, selecting asymmetrical columns of keys all leaning to the left for one method of typing characters, or selecting symmetrical columns of keys all leaning inwards for a different method of typing the same characters.

* * *